

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

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The artist's role as a social commentator is examined in an exhibition of prints and drawings entitled "Satire and Social Comment," on view at The Cleveland Museum of Art now through October 31, 1975. The 123 works, drawn from the Museum's collection, date from the late 15th through the first half of the 20th century. Themes of the works range from humorous observations of social customs and manners to bitter statements about war, poverty, and injustice. Among the 40 European and American artists represented in the exhibition are Albrecht Dürer, Hans Holbein, Francisco de Goya, William Hogarth, Honoré Daumier, George Grosz, Pablo Picasso, and James Thurber.

The earliest works in the exhibition are late 15th-century engravings commenting on the male-female relationship, such as Albrecht Dürer's The Ill-Assorted Couple. The German master Hans Holbein the Younger is represented by four woodcuts from his famous Dance of Death series, executed in 1523, a medieval theme depicting Death as the harvester of every class of man. The Flemish artist Hieronymous Bosch interprets the parable of The Blind Leading the Blind, while his countryman, Pieter Brueghel the Elder, describes an amusing scene in an alchemist's workshop.

The most shocking works in the exhibition are the six etchings from The Miseries of War, a record of cruelties in The Thirty Years War by the great French etcher Jacques Callot, and six etchings from Francisco de Goya's The Horrors of War, a depiction of atrocities committed by French

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soldiers following Napoleon's invasion of Spain. Goya is also represented by ten other works, including six etchings from The Caprices, bitter attacks on Spanish society and the Church.

In a light and humorous vein are works by Thomas Rowlandson and William Hogarth satirizing life and manners in 18th-century England. The Four Times of Day, a series of four engravings by Hogarth, is typical of his detailed and realistic tableaux of London life.

The comic works of Honoré Daumier, the 19th-century French caricaturist, come close to present-day cartoons. In the exhibition are twelve Daumier lithographs, six parodies of themes from ancient history and six satirical views of French society.

Twentieth-century American society is the subject of works by John Sloan, Reginald Marsh and James Thurber. Sloan, a realist painter who began his career as a newspaper illustrator, was a keen observer of the human comedy, as illustrated in his etchings, Connoisseurs of Prints and The Picture Buyer. Marsh, a student of Sloan, recorded crowded scenes of New York city life, such as Coney Island and the Gayety Burlesque, seen in this exhibition. Two drawings by Thurber illustrate one of his favorite themes, the battle between the sexes.

Two world wars and a depression profoundly affected the work of 20th-century German artists George Grosz and Käthe Kollwitz. Lithographs by Grosz illustrate the plight of the worker and the decadence of society in Germany after World War I. Kollwitz's works, such as A Pregnant Woman Considers Suicide, depict the sufferings of the poor.

Revolution is the subject of lithographs by Mexican artists Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco. Rivera draws a powerful portrait of the Mexican revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata.

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The emaciated couple in Pablo Picasso's etching The Frugal Repast, dated 1904, are typical of the social outcasts painted by Picasso during his early years in Paris. Other works by Picasso in this exhibition are Dreams and Lies of Franco, etchings done in 1937, and six illustrations for Aristophanes' Lysistrata.

"Satire and Social Comment" was organized by the Museum's Curator of Prints and Drawings, Louise Richards, and Assistant Curator Anne Lockhart.

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